

But the report also cited some sobering problems. The decline of the central business district paralleled that of many American communities. A significantly high percentage (20.6 percent) of Salina's housing was evaluated as either deteriorating or dilapidated by the 1960 census. There was a need for controlling the direction of future growth to prevent overly expensive extensions of city services in a north-south direction. Finally, the absence of an industrial base—and the overwhelming reliance on Schilling Air Force Base and trade revenues was recognized. With regard to the latter, the report notes:

Obviously the growth pattern and future of Schilling Air Force Base are quite vital to any intelligent forecasts or predictions for the future of Salina. Unfortunately, the future of most military installations is virtually impossible to forecast.

In the various sections of the report which were related to economic base considerations the need for diversification was emphasized repeatedly. The inference was quite clear. Efforts to attract new industry to the community had been spasmodic and ineffectual. Industrial development was and had been at a virtual standstill. Most civil leaders would admit that the reason was complacency, a complacency directly attributable in large measure to the presence of Schilling Air Force Base.

Schilling, a sprawling complex of nearly 4,000 acres, located less than a mile from the city's boundary, represented approximately 25 percent of the county population in the fall of 1964. Except for a 2-year period of deactivation in 1950-51, the community had become dependent upon the economic forces generated by the activities at the base. Schilling Air Force Base was started in 1942 as Smoky Hill Army Airfield and continued as a bomber base until deactivated in the fall of 1949. In the spring of 1952 it had been reopened as a part of the SAC family of major bomber bases and, in the early 1960's, a complex of 12 Atlas intercontinental missile installations was completed. Throughout these years, the community had received the economic benefits of nearly 200 million construction dollars and yearly payrolls ranging from 15 to 20 millions of dollars. Physically, the base represented over 700 buildings, hundreds of related structures, a complete complex of utility and service systems and hundreds of acres of aircraft pavements.

"Our City Planners on the Opium Pipe." This headline startled a number of Salinans reading the Salina Journal in the fall of 1964.

Is Everyone at Fifth and Ash on the Opium Pipe? Not at all, friend, not at all. Indeed the contrary is true. While to the literal-minded the predictions of Salina's newest plan for city development may seem hallucinatory, they actually are conservative in the best sense of the word. * * *

Salina's new comprehensive city plan was being discussed at public townhall meetings, and at numerous civic, fraternal, and service club meetings. The Journal and the local radio and television stations were giving full and supporting coverage to Salina's new "look at the future."

Never before have Salina's family "jewels" been so thoroughly examined and weighed * * * it is a mine of vital information * * * the report should prove helpful for private as well as public development, a handbook for industry, a record for historians, and a blueprint for city expansion * * * the basic information should enable Salina to act with wisdom and success in guiding our inevitable growth. * * *